

COPY of MINUTE of COMMITTEE of COUNCIL on EDUCATION relative to
SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS and INSTRUCTION in DUBLIN.

Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education,
South Kensington.

At South Kensington, 21 September 1865.

By the Right Honourable the Lords of Her Majesty's most Honourable Privy
Council on Education.

PRESENT:

The Right Honourable the Earl
Granville, K.G.

The Right Honourable H. A.
Bruce, M.P.

SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS AND INSTRUCTION IN DUBLIN.

1. My Lords take into consideration the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Scientific Institutions in Dublin, 1864; the Report of the Treasury Commission of 1862, and the correspondence and various documents, &c., on the subject.

2. The Vice-President stated the result of the investigations on the spot he had recently made into the several institutions in Dublin.

3. The Report of the Treasury Commission of 1862 recommended the abolition of the Museum of Irish Industry and the concentration of all its collections under the charge of the Royal Dublin Society, except that of the Geological Survey, which was to remain under its own officers. The Society was also to be entrusted with direct scientific instruction in certain subjects, by means of public lectures, which the Commission considered it advisable should be continued in Ireland as supplementary to the ordinary instruction in science provided for by the Science Schools and Classes of the Science and Art Department, and applicable as well to Ireland as to other parts of the United Kingdom.

4. The Select Committee of the House of Commons of 1864, on the other hand, recommended the retention of the Museum of Irish Industry as a separate institution, and a redistribution of duties between it and the Royal Dublin Society, and stated it as their opinion that the technical and scientific instruction given in Dublin at the expense of the State should not be entrusted to a body of private gentlemen like the Royal Dublin Society, but rather to a public scientific institution as in London, under a proper system of responsibility, with examinations and prizes or certificates of competency. They recommended that the Royal Dublin Society should be confined to the arrangement proposed in 1854, and altogether relieved of its educational functions, so called, pointing out that "much of the substance of their resolutions may be found represented" in a memorandum submitted by Mr. Cole to the Science and Art Department in January 1854. This memorandum suggested that the promotion of direct instruction should be confided to a College of Science proposed to be founded on the Museum of Irish Industry, and that the Royal Dublin Society should take charge of those objects which partook of the nature of public exhibitions, such as the Botanic Gardens, the Zoological Museum, &c.

5. The Select Committee of 1864, however, while thus broadly indicating the division which should exist between the functions of these two departments, modified in several respects the application of the general principle, and proposed that

that the Royal Dublin Society should still remain charged with educational functions in respect of agriculture. Their report also recommended the establishment of a veterinary school, on the grounds that "a veterinary school and an agricultural chemist are legitimate adjuncts to a society originally formed for the encouragement of agriculture and the improvement of land, and containing so large a body of country gentlemen perfectly capable of forming a judgment in veterinary matters and the application of agricultural chemistry."

6. My Lords are prepared to adopt the general principle of the recommendations of the Select Committee, subject to the approval by Parliament and the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury of the increased expenditure which will be necessary for efficiently carrying out the same. They are of opinion that it is unadvisable to make any modification of the broad principle laid down by the Select Committee, and that a clear line of demarcation between the functions of the Museum of Irish Industry and the Royal Dublin Society should be strictly maintained, so as to avoid future complications. They therefore determine that the grant of public funds shall in future be afforded in Dublin—(I.), to instruction in science applied to industry as one public object administered wholly by one authority; and (II.), to the exhibition of scientific collections as a second public object to be administered by another distinct authority.

7. The other several objects, such as a veterinary college, although they may be fit objects for a private society, such as the Royal Dublin Society, do not appear to be of a character which ought to be maintained out of the general taxation, and are not such as my Lords are prepared to recommend for Parliamentary aid. They see that this contingency has been met by the Select Committee, who suggest in their report, "That a portion of the private contributions of the Society may be applied to the maintenance of this department," namely, the Veterinary School.

8. My Lords propose that the following departments of the Royal Dublin Society shall be wholly supported by public funds, like the corresponding public institutions in London, the Society acting as trustees and being responsible for their administration:—

The Museum of Natural History, including Mineralogy.

The Botanic Gardens and Museum at Glasnevin.

The Library of the Royal Dublin Society.

Leinster Lawn, which should be made a public ornamental garden, instead of remaining, as at present, a waste space between the National Gallery and the Museum of Natural History.

The whole of the premises of the Royal Dublin Society, and the necessary staff of the Society for conducting the business involved in the above-mentioned objects.

9. The theoretical limitation of the amount of public funds to 5,500 *l.* annually should be abolished, and the annual grants necessary for keeping the above departments in efficiency considered on merits and submitted to Parliament every year.

10. The Royal Dublin Society would thus be relieved of all restrictions on its action in the application—in accordance with the charter and objects of the Society—of the subscriptions of its members and any other private funds, and not be subject to the Audit Office in respect of such private funds. The Society would be thus free to encourage any objects it has at heart—even those of direct instruction—without asking for the sanction of the Science and Art Department, as is necessary under the present arrangement.

Museum of Irish Industry.

11. Turning now to the Museum of Irish Industry, my Lords find that the Select Committee recommended one of two courses, either that the Museum of Irish Industry should have at least the same scope given to it as the Museum in Jermyn-street, and be placed on the same footing as a school of mines as regards its collections, professors, and lectures, or that those lectures and collections might be

he extended to the illustration of such other industrial objects as may be sanctioned by the Government. While suggesting, however, that the scope of the Museum should be thus widened, and quoting approvingly the before-mentioned memorandum of Mr. Cole's to that effect, the Committee decline to give any decided opinion on the ground of its being too wide a subject to be dealt with by them, leaving it thus an open question for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

12. It would appear that the one School of Mines already existing in Jernyn-street, is not largely attended, and is amply sufficient for the wants of the whole United Kingdom, and there probably would not be sufficient attendance to justify the establishment in Ireland of a second school with a large staff, for this object alone, as the few special mining pupils from that country might easily join the school in London.

13. My Lords consider that, for these and other reasons, the Museum of Irish Industry should have a wider scope given to it than that of a school of mines; that it should become a college for affording a complete and thorough course of instruction in those branches of science which are more immediately connected with and applied to all descriptions of industry, including agriculture, mining, and manufactures; that it should in this way supplement the elementary scientific instruction already provided for by the science schools of the department; and that it should assist in the training of teachers for these schools.

14. The Museum of the College of Science should be entirely subordinate to, and contain only such collections as are essential to the instruction in the College, but should still remain the depository for the Collections of the Geological Survey. It is advisable, therefore, that the Museum should hand over to the Royal Dublin Society its Portlock Collection of Birds and Fishes, and receive from the Royal Dublin Society its collection of Physical Instruments and Apparatus.

15. This arrangement, embodying the spirit of the recommendations of the Select Committee as respects both the Royal Dublin Society and the Museum of Irish Industry, my Lords believe to be based upon a broad, clear, and intelligible principle of action. They trust that it will remove the present causes of controversy, and commend itself to the judgment of Parliament.

16. My Lords do not consider it will be necessary that the Zoological Society should receive their grants any longer through the Royal Dublin Society. The question of privileges between the members of the two Societies will therefore be a matter of private arrangement between them.

17. Transmit a copy of this Minute to the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury for their sanction to the arrangements proposed.